

Little Rock Central High School

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Little Rock Central High School National
Historic Site



Bicycle Tours



Join park rangers for a guided bicycle tour or strike out on your own to discover sites related to the 1957 desegregation crisis at Little Rock Central High School. For more information, call 501-374-1957.

Safety Checklist

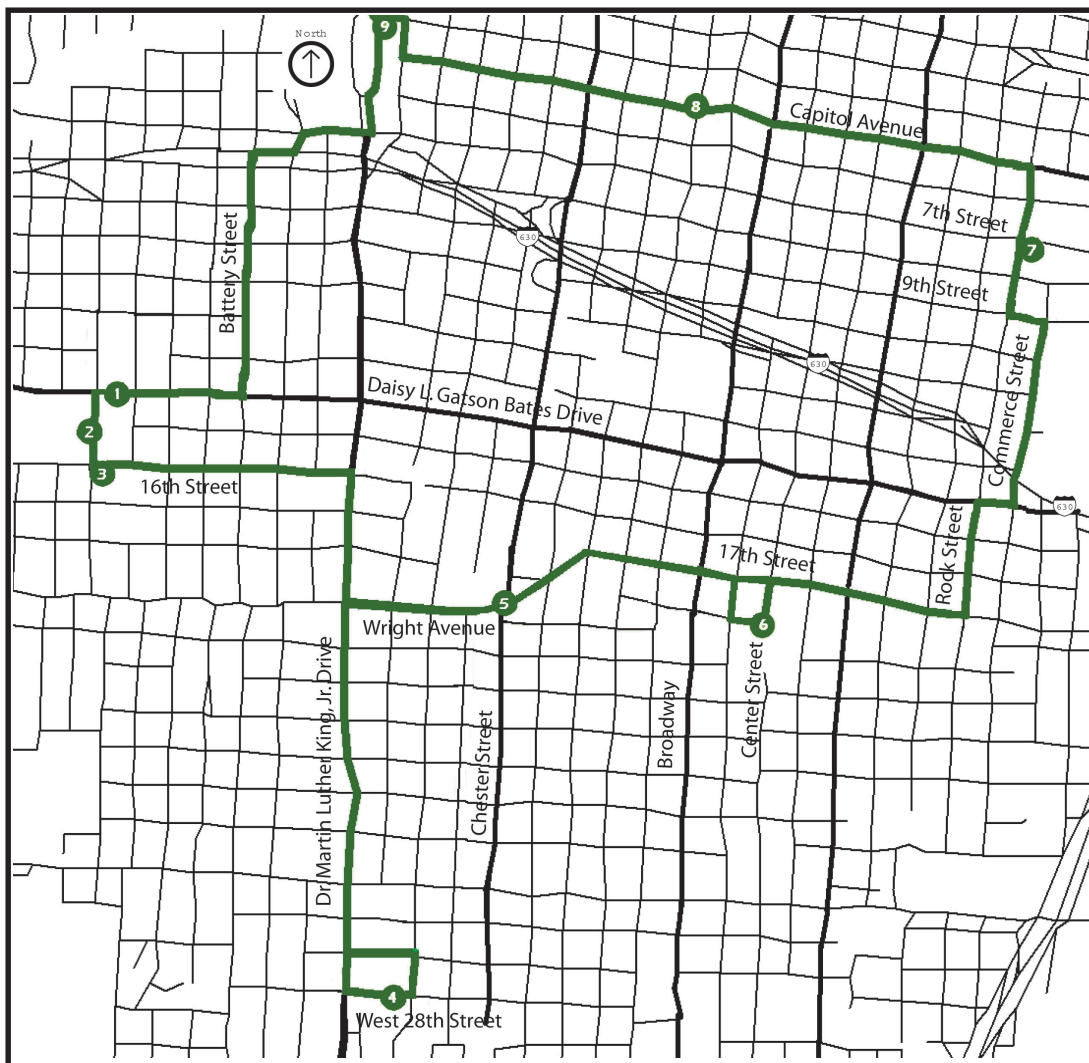
The tour is approximately 7.4 miles long. Before you embark on the tour, follow these safety tips:

Wear a helmet at all times.

Drink plenty of water.

Ensure your tires are properly inflated and your chain is oiled.

Remember that you are riding on city streets. Always ride with the traffic and yield to pedestrians.



Map created by Little Rock Central High School EAST Lab students.

Sites of Interest During the 1957 Crisis



Little Rock Central High School

1. Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center

2125 Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive

Housed in a former Mobil gas station, the visitor center tells the story of the integration of Central High School in 1957 through exhibits and ranger-led programs.

2. Little Rock Central High School

1500 S. Park Street

Central functioned as an all-white high school for thirty years before Little Rock began integrating its schools in 1957. Central served as the backdrop for one of the most pivotal moments in our nation's history when the Little Rock Nine became the first African Americans to attend the school under federal troop protection. Central High remains an operating high school today.

3. Ponder's Drug Store

Southeast corner of Park & 16th Streets

After being turned away from Central High School by the Arkansas National Guard on September 4, 1957, Elizabeth Eckford attempted to use the telephone at Ponder's Drug Store to call for a taxi. The owner of the store, seeing the mob behind her, locked the door before Eckford could enter. She had no choice but to face the mob until a bus arrived at the bus stop that would take her to safety.

4. Daisy & L.C. Bates Home

1207 W. 28th Street

Daisy Bates and her husband, L.C., were civil rights pioneers in Arkansas. L.C. Bates owned and edited the largest African-American newspaper in Arkansas, the *Arkansas State Press*. Daisy Bates served as the president of the state conference of the NAACP's Arkansas branches. Her duties with the NAACP led her to become a mentor and advocate for the Little Rock Nine. Throughout the 1957 crisis, the Bates's home was under attack for their courageous stand in support of civil rights. Today, Arkansas observes a state holiday in honor of Daisy Bates, and the Bates's home was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2002.

5. Paul Laurence Dunbar High School

1100 Wright Avenue

Built in 1929, Dunbar High School was the most modern and complete high school constructed for African Americans in the state. Dunbar housed a junior high school as well as a junior college. In 1955 Dunbar became strictly a junior high when Horace Mann High School opened as the new high school for African Americans. Today, Dunbar is a Magnet Middle School.

Dunbar was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

6. Governor's Mansion

1800 Center Street

Until 1950, no official residence existed for Arkansas's chief executive. Construction began for the Georgian-style structure in 1947 on the site of the former School for the Blind. Orval Faubus was the third governor to reside in the Governor's Mansion from 1955 to 1967.

7. Terry Mansion (Decorative Arts Museum)

411 E. 7th Street

Infuriated by the failed leadership from both the private and public sectors of Little Rock in September 1958, a group of women met at Adolphine Fletcher Terry's home to form the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC.) The WEC became the first organization to publicly condemn Governor Faubus's closing of Little Rock's high schools, and worked to turn the tide of public opinion in favor of reopening the schools.

8. Federal District Courthouse

700 W. Capitol Avenue

During the tumultuous 1957-58 school year the Little Rock School Board sought to delay integration until 1961. The NAACP challenged this move in federal court in the case of *Aaron v. Cooper*. The court ruled in favor of the school board but the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed that decision in 1957. The school board appealed to the United States Supreme Court, which affirmed the Appeals Court decision and ordered the Little Rock School Board to continue with its desegregation plan on September 12, 1958. That same day Governor Orval Faubus signed legislation closing Little Rock's high schools pending a public vote on integrating all of the schools.

9. Arkansas State Capitol and Little Rock Nine Statues - 1 Capitol Mall

Designed and conceived by Arkansas artist John Deering, "Testament" is the official state recognition of the Little Rock Nine. The nine students are looking up at Governor Faubus's office where he signed the order that sent the National Guard to halt integration at Central High School. "Testament" is the first commemoration of civil rights pioneers by any state. Arkansans witnessed the Little Rock Nine reunite in August 2005 to dedicate the statues honoring their accomplishments.



Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (now Magnet Middle School)



Daisy Bates Home National Historic Landmark



Terry Mansion (Arkansas Arts Center's Decorative Arts Museum)



"Testament" by John Deering. Photo courtesy Arkansas Secretary of State's Office.